

Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association



ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

January 12, 2026

The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government on Elections
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association Support for H-7049 and H-7007

Dear Chairman Shanley and Hon. Members of the House Cmte. on State Gov't and Elections:

As Chairperson of the Elections Committee of the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association, I am writing to inform you the membership of the RITCCA Elections Committee voted to **support** the following legislation that is now before the House Committee on State Government and Elections:

H-7049 – This critical bill is the highest priority for municipal election clerks in 2026, and would move the 2026 September Primary to Wednesday due to serious logistical, staffing, and cost concerns surrounding the Labor Day holiday. We are hopeful this legislation can be considered and enacted early in the session, for voter, candidate, and election official preparation ahead of September, and to ensure municipalities can smoothly run the 2026 primary elections.

We note that our local election official colleagues in Massachusetts recently saw their legislature enact similar legislation, changing the date of their primary, in large part due to similar logistical and cost concerns around Labor Day. In Rhode Island, we estimate the added personnel cost for cities and towns to set up over 400 polling locations on Labor Day itself – and then conduct early voting simultaneously with Primary Day – would be over \$200,000 statewide.

Beyond mere cost concerns, however, are serious fears held by many towns and cities regarding the space available for polling locations and early voting, which are not, in theory, supposed to be conducted simultaneously. We also have concerns about voter confusion with both methods of voting being operated simultaneously, and with the added need to hire additional poll workers, which is already an ongoing challenge. Moving Primary Day to Wednesday completely mitigates these concerns by removing Labor Day from the equation, and is in keeping with existing state law that already moves primaries to Wednesday when they conflict with a religious holiday, as occurred most recently in 2018.

H-7007 – This bill, introduced on behalf of Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore, preserves the status quo for overseas military voters and those with disabilities, by continuing the existing program allowing these specific, narrow categories of voters to access and vote their ballot securely and independently. It is vital to overcome obstacles these voters face that are not experienced by most other voters, and it is noteworthy that these categories of voters are afforded protections under federal law. As local election officials charged under federal and state law with ensuring our voters are not needlessly disenfranchised, we support the

Secretary's efforts to continue this limited, but necessary system to assist these categories of voters have their ballots successfully cast and counted.

The RITCCA is the state's association of municipal clerks and election officials, and the full association is expected to meet and vote to support these bills at our first quarterly meeting, to be held later in January. On behalf of the Elections Committee, which until that time is authorized to issue this testimony and is on record as strongly supporting both bills, we respectfully request the Honorable General Assembly consider passage of this time-sensitive legislation that holds the widespread support of local election officials throughout Rhode Island.

We likewise note the House of Representatives has passed similar legislation in previous legislative sessions, which the RITCCA has been on record as supporting.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nicholas J. Lima". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nicholas" and last name "Lima" clearly legible.

Nicholas J. Lima
Chairperson
RITCCA Elections Committee
Registrar/Director of Elections, City of Cranston Canvassing Authority

Cc: Jennifer M. West CMC, RITCCA President; Portsmouth Town Clerk
Michael Narducci, Elections Committee Vice-Chair; Administrator, Providence BOC